

strength of two persons could scarcely hold him down.—*B. & F. Med. Rev.* from *Bulletin Générale de Thérapeutique.* Feb. 1838.

SPECIAL PATHOLOGY AND SPECIAL THERAPEUTICS.

25. Periodical Uterine Dropsy.—A remarkable case of this affection, of which but very few are on record, occurred in the practice of Dr. DUBEDAT fils, of Bougon, (Lot-et-Garonne.) The subject of it was a woman 32 years of age, of lymphatic temperament, of a constitution weakened by hard work, bad food, and an unhealthy residence, and twelve years a wife.

Every month this woman passed per vaginam from twenty-five to thirty pints of clear, limpid water, of a slightly yellowish tinge, and afterwards discharged, during two days, a few drops of blood, deficient in colouring matter. After this evacuation, she was perfectly well; but another collection of water soon formed, of which she was sure to be relieved the following month. This condition had continued eight months before Dr. Dubedat saw the patient. She could assign no cause for the disease. It had come on without injury or sensible lesion of any kind, or alteration of the functions; the only change in her health was emaciation and general debility, which daily increased.

The abdomen was of extraordinary size, and there was considerable dyspnœa; the pulsations of the heart regular; digestion difficult; great constipation; urine scanty but passed frequently, and without pain; no visceral engorgement; pulse feeble, slow, contracted; face pale, as also the tongue and gums; blueness around the eyes.

The neck of the uterus was shortened and infiltrated; its body was also infiltrated, large, and light compared to its size. The principal source of complaint being the constipation, two ounces of castor oil, barley water with nitre, and emollient enemata were ordered.

The oil operated, and the day afterwards (May 28) pains in the loins came on announcing that an evacuation of water was about to take place. In fact, during the night of the 29-30 May, the discharge occurred, and the bed was entirely inundated with it.

On the 2d of June the doctor found his patient quite well; her abdomen was flat; her digestion was free; her appetite had returned; her pulse was better; and her menses had ceased.

Diuretics were ordered, and, for diet, milk morning and evening, and roast meat and meat soup for dinner.

June 10.—Urine increased in quantity.

June 15.—The abdomen had enlarged, continued to increase, and, at the usual period, the water was discharged, but only half the ordinary quantity. The menses recurred as usual.

During July the diuretics were continued in increased doses; the flow of urine became more abundant; the abdomen did not sensibly enlarge; but on the 6th of August there was a slight discharge of water. The menses appeared immediately after, and were more abundant than usual. After this the discharge of water did not recur; the menses became more abundant and continued longer; and, under the use of tonics, the patient's health was restored.—*Bulletin Général de Thérapeutique*, May, 1838.

26. On the employment of Tents in the treatment of Constipation.—The *Archives Générales* for May last contains some observations, by M. FLEURY, on the treatment of idiopathic constipation, or that form of the disease which is unconnected with any organic disease, but which seems to arise solely from atony of the rectum. M. Fleury says he has successfully treated some cases of this form of the complaint, which had resisted every other means of treatment, pointed out by authors, by tents smeared with belladonna cerate, and introduced into the rectum at bed time, and kept in all night; the size of these tents being progressively increased. By this means he asserts that he has always succeeded in

curing the most obstinate cases of constipation, and in re-establishing the functions of the intestine. In no case were more than fifteen or twenty tents required.

27. On the use of solid Nitrate of Silver in Gonorrhœal and other Discharges in Females.—It appears from the statements of M. Ratier, in a late number of the *Lancette Français*, that M. Ricord, the eminent surgeon of the Hôpital des Veneriens at Paris, was the first who employed the nitrate of silver, in the solid state, as an application in these diseases.

" Since the announcement of this practice some years ago, in the pages of the *Bulletin de Thérapeutique*, numerous medical men in other countries as well as in France, have confirmed the results of M. Ricord's experience. In Britain Drs. Balbirnie and Hannay have published memoirs on the subject, and recommended the practice in very high terms. The statements of the latter gentleman however seem to us to be too indiscriminate and unguarded; for although the gonorrhœal and other discharges from the vagina in the female have been very remarkably benefitted in our experience by the treatment alluded to, it is to be remembered that M. Ricord does not recommend its adoption, or at least does not promise much benefit from it, in all cases without exception. The differences in the character and severity of the complaint, in its duration, and in the idiosyncasy and constitution of patients, forbid the scientific man from too general and too confident expectations in the cure of any disease.

" We have another fault to object to Dr. Hannay; and this is that he has not adopted the use of the improved *porte-caustique*, recommended by M. Ricord, and trusts to the rude and clumsy expedient of a piece of the caustic inserted in a quill.

" He indeed tells us that even if the caustic should slip out and remain in the vagina, we need have no apprehension of any inconvenience; but such an assurance is not likely to satisfy any cautious surgeon. The use of the *speculum vaginae* is necessary to permit the caustic being safely and effectually conveyed to the os and cervix uteri. As the seat of the discharge may be either the neck of the womb, or merely the mucous membrane of the vagina, the mode of applying the caustic will vary to a certain extent in different examples. When the former is the case, if the interior orifice be sufficiently patent, the caustic should be introduced fairly within it, and the inner surface of the neck of the organ should be freely rubbed with it.

" In withdrawing the instrument, the whole extent of the vaginal mucous surface also should be similarly treated.

" When the uterine orifice is too narrow and confined to allow the introduction of the solid caustic, we should then use injections of the nitrate.

" In such cases, where the morbid discharge proceeds from the vagina only, it is unnecessary to apply the caustic to the os or cervix of the uterus.

" The treatment by the application of the solid nitrate of silver has been found of great benefit not only in old gonorrhœal and leucorrhœal discharges, but also in recent or acute gonorrhœa, before the inflammatory symptoms are subdued.

" The nitrate, locally applied, is a most potent *antiphlogistic* remedy. We have witnessed numerous cases of acute gonorrhœa in the female cured by two or three applications of the solid nitrate to the mucous surface of the vagina: the burning uneasiness and pain induced usually cease after the first application. When the discharge has nearly ceased, M. Ricord recommends that a plug of dry charpie should be introduced and retained in the vagina; as he is of opinion that the mucous membrane recovers its healthy condition more quickly when its opposite surfaces are kept apart from each other; just in the same manner as the discharge in *balanitis* is so much diminished by putting a strip of dry lint around the glans penis.

" However useful the treatment of Gonorrhœa, &c., by the application of the nitrate of silver has proved, M. Ricord is far from recommending its adoption, to the exclusion of other methods. The use of simple cooling injections, and of purgatives and low diet will suffice to cure many cases of the disease when

recent; and the more chronic forms are often very effectually relieved by astringent washes, and by the exhibition of steel and other tonics internally. Perhaps, no medicine is, on the whole, more efficacious in improving the general health and in thus correcting the local disease in old leucorrhœal discharges than steel, in some form or another. Warm clothing too will often contribute to remove this troublesome class of complaints.

"In reference to this point, M. Ricord says: 'how often have we seen most obstinate vaginal discharges quickly disappear, as soon as the use of warm stockings and flannel drawers had protected the feet and limbs from cold and moisture.'

"In conclusion, we are informed that M. Ricord gives a decided preference to the application of the solid nitrate of silver to the mucous surface of the vagina (and also of the os tincæ in old obstinate cases) over the use of injections of this metallic salt. All that is necessary in most cases is simply to pass the caustic rapidly along the surface.

"It has been observed that the slight irritation, thus induced, very often causes a premature coming on of the catamenia."—*Medico-Chirurgical Rev.*, July, 1838, and *Gazette des Hôpitaux*.

28. *On the use of Arsenic in some Disorders of the Uterus.*—HENRY HUNT, Esq., of Dartmouth, has communicated to the Royal Medical and Chirurgical Society a paper on this subject. Mr. Hunt was first led to observe the effects of arsenic on the uterus in a case of carcinoma of that organ, in which it relieved the suffering of the patient in a remarkable degree, and in exact proportion to the increase of its poisonous effects upon the system. This fact, added to the circumstance of the genitals being occasionally observed to be inflamed where arsenic has been taken as a poison, induced the author to hope that it might be found to be serviceable in some disorders of those parts, an opinion in which he was encouraged by the experience of Dr. Locock, in a case in which that mineral had been administered by him for a cure of the disorder of the nose, he not being aware at the time that the patient was also affected with menorrhagia. The author relates six cases of menorrhagia, in which the patients had taken arsenic with very marked benefit. In these instances there was no organic disease of the uterus; but the excessive flow of the menses appeared to be the consequence of exhaustion, originating however, in the several individuals from different causes. The success attending the use of this medicine in menorrhagia induced the author to employ it in some other disorders of the uterus; and some favorable cases of its agency are annexed. Some of the most favorable of these are a case of irritable uterus, and one of neuralgia, occurring regularly about the menstrual period, both of which were entirely relieved. The paper concludes with some observations on the effects of arsenic on the genital organs, when given in poisonous doses, from which the author infers that its agency depends on its action on the mucous membrane as a stimulant.—*London Medical Gazette*, April, 1838.

29. *Compression of the Head in Chronic Hydrocephalus.*—Induced by the belief that chronic hydrocephalus might sometimes result from the want of due resistance in the bony parietes of the head, some physicians have resorted to compression as a means of cure; and three cases have been recorded, one by Sir Gilbert Blane, (Med. and Phys. J.,) and two by Mr. Barnard. (Med. Repos.,) in which this measure seemed beneficial. The former employed a roller, and the latter straps of adhesive plaster, to effect the compression. As other means were, however, resorted to in these cases, it is difficult to determine what share the compression had in the amendment which took place; and as this last measure is said to have since failed entirely in other hands, it seems upon this result to have been abandoned by most practitioners.

Dr. ENGLEMANN, a German physician, having been constantly unsuccessful in his treatment of chronic hydrocephalus by the usual means, resolved to give a trial to compression, and the result he states to have been most encouraging. He

has tried it in ten cases since 1834, and has obtained a complete cure in all, and in no one case has it been necessary to continue the compression longer than a year.

The following is a condensed account of three of the cases related by Dr. Englemann, as given in the *Lancet*:

"CASE I.—Jan. 1834. A male child, six months of age; two brothers already cut off by hydrocephalus. The circumference of the skull is seventeen and a half inches; the anterior fontanelle is more than an inch across; all the sutures are separated from one another, and the bones of the skull are thin. The head of the infant vacillates and inclines backwards; it is unable to sustain it; the face is pale; the pupils dilated. On the 10th of January the head was shaved and moderately compressed with strips of adhesive plaster, which did not produce any apparent uneasiness or accident. No effect followed during the first month; the bandages were reapplied in February; the head now became gradually more firm, the expression of the face more marked, the sleep more tranquil. About the middle of April the bandages were again readjusted, and an important degree of improvement was now manifest; the size of the head had diminished by half an inch; the bones had increased considerably in thickness, and the sutures were nearly closed. On the first of June the apparatus was renewed for the third time, and shortly afterwards the cure was complete."

"CASE II.—May, 1835. Child one year old; same symptoms as in the former case; appetite voracious; alternations of constipation and diarrhoea; head nineteen and a quarter inches in circumference; bones thin; sutures separated from one another; scalp warm, and covered with dilated veins. The bandages of sticking plaster were continued for two months, when a marked improvement in the child's condition was observable. On the 14th of August the circumference of the head had diminished by half an inch, and the sutures were closed; the bandages were reapplied on the 3d of October. The child now began to walk about and was able to sustain his head erect on the neck; the teeth were cut without any accident. In the month of December the cure was completed."

"CASE III.—January, 1835. Child nine months of age; same symptoms as in former cases; frequent vomiting; pupils insensible; great listlessness and apathy; circumference of head nineteen inches; width of fontanelle one and a half inches. Apparatus applied, and renewed towards the end of February, when the head seemed much reduced in size. Apparatus re-applied on the 18th of March; diminution of volume of head half an inch. The apparatus was again renewed on the 15th of May, and 15th of June, at which latter period the child was restored to health; the fontanelle was now completely closed, and the head measured only eighteen inches in circumference."—*Med. Annal. and Arch. de Med.*, June, 1838.

30. *Ointment for the cure of Itch.*—Dr. ROL gives the following formula for an ointment for the cure of itch. He extols it for its efficacy, and for, at the same time, having no unpleasant odour or being in any respect disagreeable: R Ol. Amig. 3ij; Cera Alb. 3ij; melt the wax in the oil in a moderate heat, and allow the mixture to cool. Then incorporate with it, in a marble mortar, Protocloruret of mercury finely powdered 3ij.

This quantity will almost always suffice for a cure. It is to be divided into ten or twelve parts, which serve for as many frictions, to be made at night, on going to bed, over the affected parts. Many persons are cured by frictions with it to the wrists and ankles only. The ointment may be scented with oil of bergamot or of cinnamon.—*Bulletin Gén. de Thérapeut.* May, 1838.

31. *Incontinence of Urine.*—In a former No. of this Journal (August 1836, p. 505,) we noticed the success obtained by Dr. Mondière in the treatment of incontinence of urine, with the extract of nux vomica. Dr. CHERCHIARE has been equally successful, it appears, with this remedy. In the *Bulletino della Scienze di Bologna* he records two cases cured by it.

The first case was that of a girl of 19 years of age, who from her infancy had

passed her urine involuntarily every night in her sleep. Dr. C. prescribed the following: R. extr. nux vomica gr. viii. Oxid. ferri nig. Syr. Acetos. q. s. Fit pil. No. xxiv. Three to be taken daily. In eight days the cure was complete.

The second case was that of a young woman whose urine flowed involuntarily day and night after her first delivery. Dr. C. having been satisfied, by examination, that there was no fistula, but inferring therefrom that the incontinence resulted from weakness in the neck of the bladder, in consequence of contusion by the head of the child in its passage; he gave the extract of nux vomica, as in the preceding case, and in 15 days the patient was cured.—*Gaz. Med. de Paris*, 14th April, 1838.

32. *Gangrenous Stomatitis*.—M. BAUDELOCQUE, of the Childrens' Hospital, Paris, is said to be very successful in his treatment of gangrenous stomatitis (*gangrænopsis*). His treatment consists principally in the cauterization of the gangrenous spots with hydrochloric acid, and afterwards covering them with powdered chloride of lime; and the use of tonics, generally the syrup of cinchona given per anum. *Journ. de Med. et de Chimie Prat.* Jan. 1837:

33. *On Incontinence of Urine*.—THOMAS WHATLEY, Esq., has communicated to the *London Medical Gazette* (July, 1838) some interesting observations on incontinence of urine.

He very justly observes this affection may arise from two very distinct causes. "It may have its origin from some affection of the inferior spinal nerves distributed to the neck of this organ, and thus causing, as we may say, primary or idiopathic paralysis; or from a chronic change going on in the mucous lining, prompting the frequent evacuation of its contents, and gradually overcoming and destroying the resistance of the sphincter muscular fibres. Many other causes may also act sympathetically in producing symptoms of this kind. Calculus in the pelvis of the kidney or bladder, ascarides in the rectum, or an altered state of the urinary secretion, may be enumerated as those most commonly brought into play. No class of diseases needs more minute investigation to form a judgment upon the parts primarily affected, than those to which the urinary organs are subject. In men we sometimes meet with the prostatic portion of the urethra unnaturally irritable; and upon the change of position, or slight exertion, the fibres of the neck of the bladder relax, and about a tea-spoonful of urine escapes unrestrained. This does not arise from any undue fulness or distension of the organ, but solely depends upon the cause I have above mentioned; by the uneasiness it occasions momentarily relaxing the sphincter, and allowing a small portion of water to dribble away, without any effort or aiding of the will. We may in general relieve this uncomfortable state by the occasional and gentle introduction of an elastic bougie, bathing the perineum with warm water, or the hip-bath; and, if necessary, by the application of a few leeches. Medicine internally administered is but of little avail, but if any is advised, possibly the best that can be given will be the soda, with small doses of opium, at the same time keeping the bowels sufficiently soluble by mild aperients.

In those instances where irritability, or chronic inflammation of the mucous membrane, seems to be the primary cause in producing the symptoms of disease, I could recommend the balsam of copaiba, in very small and unstimulating doses, in combination with opium, and, at times also, with the infusion of the uva ursi, as the means most efficient in leading to beneficial results. Large and free doses of the balsam are but badly borne, and instead of relieving greatly increase the complaint. Eight, ten, or fifteen drops, is as much as should usually be given. The liquor potassa may sometimes be added to the above, or the patient directed to drink freely of lime-water, either alone, or when the stomach will bear it, with a little milk. If the nights are much disturbed, and the system suffers for want of rest, and there is much uneasiness about the lumbar regions, a pill composed of equal proportions of the extract of conium, and Dover's pow-

der, about two or three grains of each, and given regularly at bedtime, will materially assist our other means of cure. The loins and sacral regions may also be rubbed every night with some stimulating liniment, or, what is still better, with an ointment composed of the ungu. hydr. fort. and camphor. The strictest attention should be paid to the state of the bowels, and a mild aperient occasionally administered, carefully avoiding those of a mercurial character. The hip-bath used every third evening, generally affords much relief. The diet of the patient must be light, and the drink consist of some mild and unstimulating beverage. If wine is allowed, it should be taken diluted with water.

For that incontinence of urine which arises from paralysis, and where the coats of the bladder are in a healthy state, a more stimulating mode of treatment must be adopted. Blistering should be had recourse to, and repeated more than once if necessary. The Tinct. Lyttæ, or the powder of the fly, in small doses, from its possessing a peculiar influence over the neck of this organ, is a valuable medicine in this affection; and if it fails, when given alone, may be combined with the muriated tincture of iron, and opium. The loins, hips, and pubic regions, may also be sponged with cold salt and water every morning, and rubbed dry, either with a coarse towel, or the flesh-brush. In those cases which resist this mode of treatment, possibly the strychnine may be of service; but I have no experience of this remedy, and only point it out as well worthy the attention of others. Opium in both of these varieties is of essential service: in the first mentioned its modus operandi is easily explained, but not so in the last: possibly it may act by subduing some remote irritation in the system, from which the local disease derives its origin. The fact of a local disease having some remote constitutional origin is too strong to be denied.

34. Nitrate of Silver in Phlogosis of Mucous Membranes.—The antiphlogistic powers of nitrate of silver in inflammation of the mucous membranes, seems to becoming daily better appreciated. Its sanative influence over certain inflammations of the conjunctiva has been long known to ophthalmologists, and we formerly noticed that it had been used with advantage in gastralgia, and scirrhous of the stomach, (No. for May, 1837, p. 225,) and also in vesical cattarrh. (August, 1838, p. 488.)

M. BOUDIN has extended its application to the cure of the inflammation and ulceration of the ileum, which constitute the most constant lesions in typhoid fever. When diarrhoea is the principal symptom, he administers the nitrate in enema, in the dose of from two to eight grains dissolved in six ounces of distilled water; and when gastric symptoms predominate he gives it by the mouth in pills in the dose of a fourth to half a grain; and when the whole gastro-intestinal mucous membrane appears phlogosed, he combines the two modes of administration.—*Journ des Connais. Med. Prat.* May, 1838.

35. Subcarbonate of Iron in Hooping-cough.—Dr. STEYmann highly extols the efficacy of the subcarbonate of iron in the cure of hooping-cough, in its second stage. The following is the formula he has found most convenient: R. Ferri Subcarb. gr. xxv; Sacch. Alb. q. s. Ft. pulv. No. x. One to be given every three hours. This dose is increased according to the age of the patient, adding a grain for every year of the patient's age. Dr. S. represents the effects of this remedy to be very prompt; and states that in a few days there remains only a slight catarrhal cough, which gradually disappears.

Dr. S. cautions against the use of this remedy in the early stage of the disease: at that period it produces irritation instead of benefit. In this stage he employs leeches, opiates and emetics, and before commencing with the subcarbonate he recommends the stomach to be emptied by an emetic.—*Bulletin Gén. de Thérapeut.* March, 1838.